

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
September 11, 2023
County Board Room**

Members Present: Fred Strand; Jeffrey Silbert; Larry Fickbohm; Charly Ray

Members Absent: Steve Sandstrom

Staff in Attendance: Jason Bodine, Administrator; Deanna Regan, Office Manager

Others in Attendance: Joseph Lebouton, WI DNR, by phone

1. Call to Order of Forestry and Parks Committee Meeting.

This meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Public Comment: None.

3. Approval of the August 14th Meeting Minutes.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) Approve minutes and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.*

4. Monthly Reports.

- a) Forestry (all updates). Stumpage returns for Q1 were above average, Q2 were well below average and so far in Q3, returns are again above average. August returns were a little over \$487k, which is well above average. Stumpage revenue to date is just over \$2.5 million and is expected to end close to the actual budgeted amount of \$3.275 million. Expenses are on track.
 - a. 2023 Budget. Anticipating the purchase of a roller chopper in 2023 for barrens maintenance using savings in the 2023 capital and reforestations accounts. The cost is estimated at \$70k and anticipate applying for a few small grants, one of which is the Enbridge EcoFootprint grant, to help offset a portion of that expense. This would also eliminate the purchase from the 2024 budget.
 - b. Carbon Project. No change yet in the status of our project.
 - c. Land Acquisition Projects. Still finalizing the new ARPA contract. Once it is signed, the appraisal of the recent Bark River acquisition will be ordered. Landmark Conservancy may be present at October meeting to request support on a 160 acre purchase in Barksdale and roughly 900 acres along the Iron River. The county was recently approached by BCPL regarding interest in a 40 acre parcel in Barnes. That parcel is currently being appraised. There may be more information to share during the October meeting.
- b) Campgrounds and Day Use Parks. Planning work on first sections of retaining wall at Twin Bear next month. The Highway Department will be removing the old railroad ties and replacing them with interconnecting concrete block. It is expected that similar work will continue next season on other sections of old retaining wall. Camping receipts are still down a little compared to last season, but final returns are expected to be above average. Net camping returns were nearly \$125k as of the end of August. When the season is over, another goal will be to review current rules, regulations, and ordinances, which haven't been addressed in nearly two decades.
 - a. 2024 Seasonal Camping. The advertisement for seasonal camping at Twin Bear and Delta was distributed last week. Seasonal applications for 2024 (about 30 received so far) are being accepted until September 25th. A random number generator will be used to establish the selection order once all applications have been received and site selection will be held the following Saturday morning. The seasonal selection process will be revisited at the end of the season to determine if any modifications are needed.

- b. Campground Manager Contract. Bodine will meet with Brenda and Jeff next week to address the contract. It will be ready by the October meeting.
- c. Big Rock Sign Replacement. Continuing to work with Chequamegon Bay Arts Council (CBAC) on the sign replacement contest. Hope to have something to present during either the October or November meeting.
- c) Trails and Recreation.
 - a. Motorized Trails. Various state motorized rec council meetings were held last week to address the next grant cycle. Snowmobile supplemental was approved at 100%, meaning all eligible expenses over the regular maintenance grant will be covered by the state.
 - b. Non-Motorized Trails. Work continues at Siskiwit Falls including the installation of new steps on the west side trail, improvements to the eastern parking lot, and improvements to the orchard loop. Projects at Lost Creek and Jolly are also in progress. There has been a steady stream of garbage left behind in the vault toilet at Lost Creek Falls trail head. Signs addressing this have gone unnoticed or have been removed. If this continues, we'll need to explore other options.
 - i. Brownstone Trail. Ownership of the Maki property was officially transferred to the county last week. Continue to work with Landmark on repair/restoration plans. Bayfield County was recently informed that our \$200k Stewardship grant application, in which Landmark did the heavy lifting, was tentatively approved. This would be used to address repairs to the Brownstone Trail.
 - c. Yurts. Rentals have been relatively steady through the last few months.
 - d. Events. Nothing new to report.

MOTION: (Fickbohm, Ray) Receive reports as presented and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.

5. **2024 Campground Rates.** Last adjustments to transient rates were in 2021. Seasonal rates were adjusted in 2022. No changes are recommended for Big Rock in 2024 (\$15/night). Recommend increasing seasonal rates by \$100 for Twin Bear and Delta Lake to \$1,800 (\$1,900 for premium sites) and increasing seasonal boat mooring rates by \$25 to \$325/season. No change to other rates. Increases would help to offset growing costs associated with maintaining these facilities and if approved, would go into effect starting with the 2024 season.

MOTION: (Ray, Silbert) Approve 2024 season rate increases. All: Yes. Carried.

6. **2024 Forestry and Parks Department Budget.** Bodine summarized the revised draft budget adjustments. Increases in stumpage and park returns increase budget revenue. Decreases in the vacant rec position, town road aids, and reforestation are the most significant reductions in expenses. The removal of the 4th yurt/camping structure, dock extension and roller chopper (being addressed in 2023) are the most significant changes to capital. Pigeon Lake assessment was reduced to \$30k but is still in the budget. As a result of modifications made by Administration, the net levy contribution was increased from roughly \$1.675 million to \$1.901 million. Committee discussion regarding these changes to the budget since submission to Administration. Primary discussion targeted the proposed temporary elimination of funding for the vacant recreation specialist position. Concerns were expressed about relying on future carbon returns to fund the position. Discussion on the importance of the position for the future of recreation in the Department. Bodine recommended proposing the budget for the position be returned to 50%, to coincide with filling the vacancy around the middle of next year. There would still be a significant savings in the budget and it's highly likely the Department won't be ready to fill the position until mid-year. The Committee agreed with that approach.

- 7. Access Permit Request.** Vernon and Karen Semb are requesting a 10-year temporary access permit. They are new landowners and previous owners had an access permit on the same road. Bodine recommends approval.

MOTION: (Fickbohm, Ray) Approve access permit request. All: Yes. Carried.

- 8. Committee Members Discussion.** Short discussion regarding garbage at Jackman Lake. Fire Hill property was also discussed.

- 9. Joseph LeBouton, DNR Representative, Comments:** None

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting has been scheduled for **Monday, October 9th, at 6:00 PM** in the County Board Room.

Meeting adjourned at 7:13 PM.

Submitted by,
Deanna Regan